(b) if so, steps taken in this regard and the details of the suggestions given in this regard by the National Commission constituted for industries of the unorganized sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND PROMOTION, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) and (b) The National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector (NCEUS) in its report on 'Creation of a National Fund for the Unorganised Sector' has proposed creation of a National Fund for the non-farm unorganized sector to cater to the developmental needs of the unorganized sector through assistance in areas of credit, marketing, skill development, technology upgradation, common infrastructure development, etc. The proposal is under consideration of the Government.

India's share in International wool market

†1648. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India's share in the International wool market is just negligible;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) what steps have been taken to modernize the wool industry with a view to increase India's export of wool and mixed products in the International markets; and

(d) what steps have been taken by Government to improve upon the species of sheep and also produce wool of fine quality with a view to increasing production of wool?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Yes, Sir. India's share in International Wool Market is approximately 3%.

(b) The probable reasons may be low yield (approximately 0.900 Kg. sheep/year) in comparison to world average (3.500 Kg. sheep/year); inadequate availability of pasture/ grazing land and low return from the wool produce.

(c) The Government has taken up steps by sanction of a separate scheme *i.e.* "Quality Processing of Wool & Woolens" and through creation of Common Facility Centre for improvement in quality and quantity of the finished goods for better returns. The Technology Upgradation Fund scheme has already been extended upto 2012.

(d) The Government through Central Wool Development Board, Jodhpur has taken up a separate scheme *i.e.* "Integrated Wool Improvement & Development Programme" for Improvement of Wool Fibre in the country with a provision of Rs. 48.82 Crore in the XI Five Year Plan. The scheme has separate components of breed improvement; health coverage; product development and marketing assistance.

Closure of small and medium exporting industries

1649. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of small and medium scale exporting industries are closing on account of current exchange rate scenario; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the action proposed by Government to remedy the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Government is receiving reports of closure and loss of jobs of export units especially in labour intensive sectors such as handicrafts, marine products, textiles, leather and leather products and plantations;

(b) To ensure that the job losses in these sectors are minimized, Government announced a set of measures aimed at providing relief to the exporters. These include reduction in the interest rate on pre shipment and post shipment credit, increase in drawback, and DEPB rates, a select set of services for refund/exemption of service taxes, interest on certain EEFC balances and increasing the list of products under Vishesh Krishi and Gram Udyog Yojna and also raising the revenue ceiling under the Scheme by Rs. 300 crores, aaccelerated reimbursement of terminal excise duty and central sales tax to exporters, provision of payment of interest for delays in re-imbursement of Terminal Excise Duty and Central Sales Tax. It is expected that these measures would, to some extent, neutralize the impact of rupee appreciation.

Status of Doha round of talks

1650. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of the Doha round of talks on International Trade; and

(b) when and where the next round of talks are likely to be held?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) The World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations on Agriculture, Non Agricultural Market Access (NAMA), Services and other areas are being held in accordance with the mandate contained in the Doha Ministerial Declaration of 2001; the Framework Agreement of July, 2004; and the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration of December, 2005. On 17 July 2007, the Chairmen of the WTO's Committee on Agriculture (Special Session) and the Negotiating Group on Market Access brought out Draft Modalities on Agriculture and NAMA respectively. Multilateral discussions on the two Draft Modalities texts are being held since September 2007. The current Round of talks are likely to continue for a further period of time.

Unfair treatment to crops like apple at WTO

1651. SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have noted that crops like apple do not receive fair treatment during World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations;

(b) whether it is a fact that Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) between India and neighbouring countries is harming Indian apple farmers' interests;